

rights situation would improve, Vietnam became the first country to be removed from the Countries of Particular Concern. It was also part of an effort to try to get into the World Trade Organization.

Despite this flurry of international recognition, tangible economic benefit, despite the hopes of many, including and especially the Vietnamese people, Vietnam has reverted with a vengeance to its repressive practices and has arrested, imprisoned and imposed lengthy prison sentences on numerous individuals who only want freedom.

Mr. Speaker, these massive human rights violations perpetrated by the Government of Vietnam cannot be overlooked, they cannot be trivialized. These human rights violations occur as we meet here today, and they cannot continue without equally serious consequences.

I do believe that this snapback to human rights abuse underscores perhaps the unwitting naivete on the part of some who think if we just trade, things will get better. It has not.

And finally, I would ask my colleagues to take a look at pages H 4248 and H4249 from the May 1, 2007 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, a manifesto that was written and signed on April 8, 2006, called the 8406 Block. It is a call for freedom and democracy and non-violence.

One by one, those who have signed this very important human rights document in Vietnam have been hunted down, arrested and incarcerated by the government. That's like the people who signed the Declaration of Independence, or again, during the Soviet years, those who would sign manifestos calling for human rights, like Charter 77, who because they espoused freedom, found themselves in a Gulag or being mistreated by the government.

I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to support this. This is a bipartisan bill, and I appreciate that. This is the kind of expression that I think this body is known for, speaking with one voice, truth to power, on behalf of human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself with the distinguished and most eloquent statement made by my good friend from New Jersey.

I have not had the privilege of visiting Vietnam since the days of the war in 1967, 1968, but I do intend to visit that country since it comes under the jurisdiction of my subcommittee.

But again, I want to thank my good friend for the facts and the data that he just presented. I hope my colleagues will take him up on reading some of these important documents that he had shared with us in his presentation.

At this time, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished lady from California, my good friend, Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. I thank the chairman for allow-

ing me to speak today on this issue of the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007.

As you know, I represent the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam in the world, and so I've had the chance to visit Vietnam now three times. Actually, I just finished visiting in April of this year. Before that, I had been denied a visa to visit Vietnam for three times in the past 2½ years.

Now, I rise today in support of my colleague's House Resolution 3096, because this is a very critical time in our relationship with Vietnam.

Before being accepted in the World Trade Organization in January, the Government of Vietnam assured the world that they would make significant progress in the area of human rights, things that we, as Americans, really sometimes take for granted; freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of collective bargaining, freedom to assemble as we wish, and most importantly, really one of the reasons our country was founded, freedom of religion.

As my colleague from New Jersey stated, we had put Vietnam on the List of Particular Concern with respect to the infringement on religious beliefs of the people of Vietnam, and even they were taken off in anticipation of this issue of going into the WTO. Many, many promises in the 11 years that I have served in the Congress, many, many promises by the communist Government of Vietnam, yet nothing ever holds up. And in this particular case, every person who has stood up to speak inside of Vietnam for democracy, for democracy, for something other than the communist party, for free elections, for return of land confiscated by that government, for their ability to practice the religion that they want, for their ability to assemble three or four or five on a street corner with a simple sign, asking, wanting, searching for democracy. And each and every one of these people are under house arrest, have been put in prison. One of them, Father Ly, for example, was given a trial, a trial that lasted one day, no attorney available to him, in a very famous photograph sent across the world of the communist government with their hand over his mouth at his very own trial because they didn't want him to be heard by the world.

The venerable Thich Quang Do, a Buddhist, through peaceful means saying we need religious freedom, recognize the church where most of the Buddhists in Vietnam want to belong. But nothing. Instead, he is under house arrest. All of these dissidents, and yet they continue to speak up and try to tell the world that there is no human right in Vietnam. And they continue to fight.

Many of my colleagues on the other side and on our side of the aisle have been working to get this message out. So then they got WTO, and they imprisoned everybody. I was there in April. There were no dissidents to meet. I asked to go to the prisons. I

asked to go see those who had been put behind bars. They laughed. They would not let me. They said, How dare you ask. You know better than to ask to see these people. And our ambassador, at his residence there, put together a tea of the wives and the mothers of the dissidents, not people who had spoken up, simply because they were married and these women were worried about their husbands. And they came to talk to us. They were stopped at their homes. They were barricaded in their homes. The streets were barricaded to their homes so they couldn't get out. And the two who made it, now in a very famous video playing on the Internet, as I came to the home, so did those women, the two who got through. And about 25 communist government soldiers descended upon us, pulling us apart and dragging away one of the women. The ambassador came out. He said these women are simply here to come and have tea with us. But they would have none of it. This is democracy? These are the human rights that this government promised?

So I say today, let us not be conspirators with this government in the backslide of progress. Please, I ask my colleagues, join us in voting for this resolution today.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), who has spoken out on behalf of human rights in Vietnam with great faithfulness, is also a cosponsor of this legislation, and also promoted legislation that was successful in expanding Radio Free Asia.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007.

I join Congressman SMITH, and the efforts made by others here that have been tireless, the strategy of trying to shine some light on Vietnam, trying to get the international community to look at what is happening there.

I've worked with Congressman SMITH on this legislation since 2001, and I know the importance of having it passed, but also, I know the trouble that it has been met with in the other body. And if we can overcome the objections of a few in the other body, this bill will be an important tool in pressing Hanoi to end its wanton disregard for human rights.

I think the necessity of this legislation is because since early this year the crackdown has intensified in Hanoi, in Vietnam to such an extent that especially students, especially spokesmen for religious organizations there are receiving these one-hour show trials where afterwards they're being sent to a penitentiary, 8 years in the case of Father Ly. It was 14-some years ago when he was sent away the first time. And Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity there, in Vietnam, to meet with the venerable Thich Quang Do, when he was under house arrest, and Le Quang Liem and see the incredible repression that they face, and to